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FOOD CONSUMPTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE NORTHEAST 1/

Households in the Northeast had much higher consumption rates per person than in other regions for lamb, veal, and seafood in the spring of 1955, but were quite low in the use of pork, flour and cereals, fats and oils, and sugar and sweets. These findings are from the USDA's nationwide household food consumption survey. 2/

This region constituted almost a third of the U. S. food market, although only a little more than a quarter of the population lived there. The Northeast consumes considerably more food than it produces.

Households in the Northeast purchased a greater share of the food used at home than those in other regions. Part of this was due to the large proportion of the households located in urban areas. But in northeastern rural households, home production of food was relatively less significant as a source of food.

Northeastern Food Consumption Rates

The Northeast led all other regions in the consumption rates for lamb and mutton, veal, seafood, chicken, cheese 3/, fruit juices, and bakery products other than bread. In addition, consumption rates in this region were above the U. S. average rates for frozen vegetables, fluid whole milk, potatoes, fresh fruits, and bread (table 4).

Northeastern households ranked lowest on pork, eggs, flour and other cereal products, fats and oils, and sugar and sweets. Their consumption rates were close to the U. S. averages for beef, ice cream, fresh vegetables, vegetable juices, canned fruits, and canned vegetables. 4/

These rankings generally held for each of the urbanization groups but some did vary (table 4). Income, availability of foods (seasonality, etc.), extent of home production, household composition, and other such factors contributed to the differences for the urbanization groups.

1/ By Thomas J. Lanahan, Jr., Statistical and Historical Research Branch, AMS.

2/ Based on data from Report Nos. 1-5, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey. The northeastern region is made up of those States from Pennsylvania and New Jersey northward to the Great Lakes and Canada. Other regions in the comparison are North Central, South and West.

3/ Excluding cottage cheese.

4/ For a similar comparison in other regions see the following articles in previous issues of The National Food Situation: "Food Consumption in the South," NFS-79, February 1957, pp. 34-36, "Some Highlights of the Urban Household Market for Food," NFS-80, April 1957, p. 30, and "Food Consumption in the North Central Region," NFS-80, April 1957, pp. 47-49.

Reprinted from The National Food Situation, NFS-81, July 1957.

Table 4.- Consumption per person of selected foods, by urbanization group, households of 2 or more persons, in the U. S. and the Northeast, at home in a week, spring 1955 ^{1/}

Food and source	Unit	All urbanizations		Urban		Rural nonfarm		Farm	
		U. S.	North-east	U. S.	North-east	U. S.	North-east	U. S.	North-east
		:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Meat, total ^{2/}	:Pounds:	3.03	3.07	3.18	3.10	2.81	2.93	2.83	3.33
Beef	: do. :	1.25	1.28	1.34	1.29	1.10	1.24	1.17	1.54
Home-produced only	: do. :	---	---	---	---	.05	.01	.71	.88
Veal	: do. :	.08	.12	.10	.16	.05	.05	.02	.06
Pork	: do. :	1.14	.98	1.13	.95	1.13	1.02	1.21	1.16
Home-produced only	: do. :	---	---	---	---	.08	.04	.63	.51
Lamb, mutton	: do. :	.08	.18	.12	.22	.04	.08	.02	.08
Chicken	: do. :	.63	.68	.69	.77	.51	.47	.61	.53
Home-produced only	: do. :	---	---	---	---	.07	.04	.44	.34
Fish and shellfish	: do. :	.39	.44	.41	.47	.38	.35	.36	.35
Eggs	:Dozens:	.61	.56	.58	.55	.60	.54	.73	.75
Home-produced only	: do. :	---	---	---	---	.11	.05	.59	.58
Fluid whole milk	:Quarts:	3.03	3.26	2.98	3.29	2.80	3.04	3.67	4.02
Home-produced only	: do. :	---	---	---	---	.29	.05	3.00	3.01
Ice cream	: do. :	.32	.30	.34	.26	.30	.39	.32	.46
Cheese, other than cottage	:Pounds:	.18	.22	.19	.21	.19	.26	.16	.21
Fresh vegetables ^{3/}	: do. :	2.63	2.63	2.69	2.71	2.43	2.31	2.78	2.93
Home-produced only	: do. :	---	---	---	---	.57	.60	1.30	1.73
Frozen vegetables ^{3/ 4/}	: do. :	.14	.19	.18	.20	.10	.15	.04	.10
Canned vegetables ^{3/ 5/}	: do. :	.77	.75	.82	.78	.77	.71	.56	.49
Vegetable juices ^{6/ 7/}	: do. :	.18	.20	.20	.22	.15	.16	.14	.16
Potatoes, sweetpotatoes	: do. :	1.88	1.96	1.71	1.76	2.05	2.28	2.24	3.18
Home-produced only ^{8/}	: do. :	---	---	---	---	.17	.12	.66	1.05
Fresh fruits	: do. :	2.83	2.91	2.87	2.74	2.72	3.16	2.81	4.01
Home-produced only	: do. :	---	---	---	---	.46	.34	1.02	1.05
Canned fruits ^{5/}	: do. :	.45	.46	.53	.50	.39	.41	.26	.22
Fruit juices ^{6/ 9/}	: do. :	.86	1.10	1.04	1.20	.69	.85	.46	.78
Flour and other cereal products	: do. :	1.77	1.04	1.28	.90	2.14	1.26	3.07	1.85
Bread	: do. :	1.41	1.53	1.49	1.48	1.43	1.63	1.07	1.61
Bakery products, other than bread	: do. :	.59	.68	.67	.73	.53	.60	.38	.43
Sugar, sweets	: do. :	1.25	.99	1.07	.85	1.34	1.23	1.79	1.80
Fats and oils ^{10/}	: do. :	.89	.76	.82	.71	.94	.87	1.06	.97

^{1/} Derived from data in reports 1 and 2, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey.

^{2/} Includes variety and luncheon meats not shown separately.

^{3/} Excludes potatoes and sweetpotatoes.

^{4/} Commercially frozen.

^{5/} Commercially canned. Includes baby foods.

^{6/} Single-strength equivalent.

^{7/} Commercially- and home-canned and frozen juices.

^{8/} White potatoes only.

^{9/} Commercially prepared juices.

^{10/} Includes butter.

"Newer" Forms of Food

Households in the Northeast apparently go in more for the "newer" forms of foods than those in other regions. For example, a greater percentage of northeastern urban households used frozen fruit and vegetable juices, fresh fruit and vegetable juices, frozen potatoes, instant coffee, and prepared and partially prepared food mixtures. This region also ranked a close second to the West in the percentage of urban households using frozen vegetables and frozen fruitades. Possibly some of these foods are marketed more extensively in the Northeast.

Dietary Levels

Diets for most households in the Northeast compared favorably with those of other regions, particularly the North Central and the West. However, a greater proportion of northeastern households in spring 1955 (22 percent) had diets which supplied less than the recommended dietary allowances for thiamine (one of the B vitamins) than those of any other region. This was the only major nutrient in which the Northeast ranked lowest among the regions. Lower consumption of pork, whole or enriched grain products, and dry beans and peas contributed to short supplies of this vitamin. Households in the Northeast were also lower on the average in the food energy content of their diets, probably due to their lower consumption rates for flour, cereals and bakery products, sugar and sweets, and fats and oils. 5/

Regional Characteristics and Probable Effects on Food Consumption

These food consumption rates are affected by a variety of economic and social factors characteristic of the region. Households in the Northeast appear to differ in some characteristics more than those in other regions. This makes the study of the region's characteristics especially important to food consumption analysis.

Degree of Urbanization

About three-fourths of the northeastern housekeeping households in the survey were in urban areas, compared with almost two-thirds for the whole country. 6/ The Northeast had only a slightly larger share of its

5/ Dietary Levels of Households in the Northeast, Report No. 7, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey, p. 2.

6/ The survey was limited to households in which at least one person had 10 or more meals from household food supplies during the 7 days preceding the survey interview. See Food Consumption of Households in the Northeast, Report No. 2, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey, pp. 1 and 193.

households in the urban group than the West, but a greater proportion were in the larger cities. Only 4 percent of the northeastern households operated a farm as against 11 percent for the country as a whole.

This high degree of urbanization and the consequent high population density helps to explain greater dependency on purchased foods (see discussion of sources of foods used given below). The smaller proportion of households operating farms, the greater concentration of population (especially the low-income households) in the larger cities, and the proximity of nearly all to well-stocked food stores contribute to less reliance on home food production. With greater dependence on purchased foods, money income available for food purchases is more important in the consumption patterns, especially for the lower-income households.

Household Size

Households in the Northeast averaged smaller than those of other regions except the West. This reflected both the smaller number of persons living in the household and a smaller proportion of the week's meals being eaten at home. 7/ Urban families of 2 or more persons in the Northeast spent 22 percent of their total food bill in spring 1955 on meals and snacks eaten away from home, the highest share among the regions. 8/ A large part of this expense was for meals eaten out, but the expense for between-meal snacks and supplements to carried lunches was much more important than in any of the other regions. In the Northeast the expense per person for food away from home increased with income, but decreased with additional persons in families, the usual pattern. The high degree of urbanization with the great density of population and the relatively larger number of adults in the Northeast also played a part in the high proportion of food eaten away from home.

Age of Population

The household population was also relatively "old," as compared to other regions. There were fewer children and more older adults (table 7). 9/ Also, 34 percent of the urban households had a wife or female head over 50 years of age, compared to 29 percent for all regions combined. 10/

7/ A larger proportion of meals eaten away from home by persons living in the household reduces the average household size which is based on the total number of meals eaten at home divided by 21.

8/ Excludes expenses for alcoholic beverages at home but includes them for food away from home. Derived from data in table 2, Report No. 2, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey, Food Consumption of Households in the Northeast.

9/ Based on the number of meals served at home. For a more detailed breakdown of the household population by sex and age groups in each northeastern urbanization and income group, see Dietary Levels of Households in the Northeast, Report No. 7, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey, pp. 9-13.

10/ Unpublished data from the 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey.

The combination of the smaller number of persons per household, including fewer children and more older adults, and the generally "older" households may help to explain the lower rates of consumption for foods used in home baking and greater use of items such as prepared and partially prepared food mixtures, frozen vegetables, instant coffee and frozen fruit and vegetables.

Employment of Housewives

The Northeast had a smaller proportion of wives or female heads of urban families working full time outside the home than other regions. ^{11/} Of those who did work, the concentration of working wives in the upper middle-income classes of the Northeast probably contributed to the greater use of frozen foods, prepared flour mixes and some other prepared foods than in the other income classes of the Northeast.

Income

The average 1954 money income for urban families in the Northeast after payment of income taxes ranked below the comparable north central and western averages but above the average income in the South. The Northeast had a greater concentration of families in the lower middle-income classes and fewer in the highest classes as compared with the North Central Region and the West. The following percentages of urban families of 2 or more persons with 1954 money incomes below the specified amounts for each of these regions illustrate this concentration:

	Under \$2,000	Under \$4,000	Under \$6,000	Under \$8,000
Northeast	6.4	36.6	75.3	90.1
North Central	5.9	29.2	66.1	84.6
West	6.6	32.1	69.9	83.8

Other Characteristics

Reports of the 1950 Census of Population yield much information on regional population characteristics which will be useful in further analysis of the 1955 survey data relating to the northeastern market. For example, national origins of the population probably affect food consumption rates. The high consumption rate for lamb and mutton in the Northeast (table 4) may be based to a considerable degree on heavy consumption by the relatively high

^{11/} Ibid.

proportion of foreign-born people or of natives with foreign or mixed parentage in the region who came from the high lamb and mutton consuming countries of Europe. 12/

The USDA Institute of Home Economics, ARS, plans to publish tabular summaries of the survey data using some of the characteristics mentioned above. 13/

Shares of the Food Market

The Northeast accounted for about 31 percent of the total U. S. food market in spring 1955, considerably more than its 27 percent share of the total family population covered by the survey. Greater reliance on purchased foods and the use of more of the higher-priced foods contribute to the large share of this region in the U. S. food market. The northeastern household food market was particularly strong for meats, dairy products, and poultry. Urban families accounted for 77 percent of the food market in the Northeast even though the population in these families made up only 71 percent of the total for the region. 14/

The Northeast is dependent on other parts of the country for much of its supplies of farm foods. Farmers in this region received just 11 percent of the total cash receipts going to all U. S. farmers for farm food commodities in 1954, but total food purchases by all northeastern housekeeping families in spring 1955 accounted for about 31 percent of the dollars spent for farm foods by U. S. housekeeping families.

Sources of Foods Used

In spring 1955 households of 2 or more persons in the Northeast purchased a greater share of the food they used at home than those in any of the other regions. 15/ Of course, part of this is due to the large

12/ U. S. Bureau of the Census. U. S. Census of Population: 1950. Vol. IV, Special Reports, Part 3, Chapter A, "Nativity and Parentage."

13/ That is, besides the standard region, urbanization group, and income class controls used in the first 5 survey reports.

14/ "Review of U. S. Food Expenditure Patterns, Spring 1955," The National Food Situation, NFS-78, October 1956, pp. 37 and 41 and "Release of 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey Reports," The National Food Situation, NFS-79, February 1957, p. 27. All references to food at home in this article exclude alcoholic beverages.

15/ Based on the total money value of food used at home (excluding alcoholic beverages) by households of 2 or more persons during a week in spring 1955. Food obtained through home production or gift or pay was valued at the average prices paid by households of the same region-urbanization group. Annual data on home food production might give a somewhat different picture because of seasonal variations. See Food Produced for Home Use in the United States--By Region, Report No. 12, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey, (in preparation), table 2, for annual data on home-produced food in 1954.

proportion of their total household population in the urban group, but within each urbanization group northeastern households bought a larger proportion of their food than was the case for all U. S. households. Here are the percentages:

	<u>All urbanization groups</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Rural nonfarm</u>	<u>Farm</u>
United States	89.4	96.8	87.7	55.9
Northeast	94.4	98.1	90.5	58.5

Only western rural nonfarm and farm households relied more heavily on food purchases than did the comparable urbanization grouping of households in the Northeast. Western farm households in particular produced for their own use much less of the fruits and vegetables that they used in the spring of 1955 and bought more. This was even more marked among higher-income farm households in the West. The larger scale of farming operations, the drier climate, and the greater proportion of high-income families probably accounted for the relatively high purchase rates for these households.

Although northeastern farm households bought a larger proportion of their food than did farm households in other regions, the total value per person of their home-produced food was the highest of the 4 regions. This indicates the generally high level of food consumption for this group of households.

In the Northeast, as in other regions, higher-income households bought much more of their food, absolutely and relatively, than did those with lower incomes. This pattern was repeated in each urbanization group, though it was less pronounced among farm households.

Shares of the Household Food Dollar

Meat, poultry and fish accounted for the largest share of each dollar northeastern urban households spent for food at home, 37 cents. Most of it, 27 cents, went for meat. Dairy products (excluding butter) with 15 cents out of every food dollar spent; vegetables (including potatoes and sweet-potatoes), and cereals and bakery products, each 10 cents; and fruits and nonalcoholic beverages with 6 cents each followed in importance (table 5).^{16/}

^{16/} For similar data on other regions see articles in earlier issues of The National Food Situation, October 1956, NFS-78, op. cit., p. 40, February 1957, NFS-79, op. cit., pp. 32-33, April 1957, NFS-80, op. cit., p. 27 and pp. 41-43.

Table 5.- Shares of major foods and food groups in food expense for home use, households of 2 or more persons, by urbanization group, in the Northeast, in a week, spring 1955 ^{1/}

Food	All	Urban	Rural nonfarm	Farm
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Meat, poultry, fish, total	35.7	36.9	32.6	26.9
Meat, total ^{2/}	27.0	27.3	26.4	22.3
Beef	11.5	11.8	10.8	8.3
Veal	1.4	1.6	.6	.4
Pork	8.2	7.9	9.3	8.0
Lamb, mutton	1.7	2.0	.9	.9
Poultry ^{3/}	5.6	6.2	3.8	2.1
Fish and shellfish	3.1	3.4	2.4	2.5
Eggs	3.8	4.0	3.6	1.7
Dairy products, total ^{4/}	15.4	15.2	16.4	12.9
Fluid whole milk	9.3	9.5	9.4	4.0
Ice cream	2.2	1.9	2.9	4.7
Cheese, other than cottage	1.9	1.8	1.8	2.5
Vegetables, total ^{5/}	8.1	8.4	7.1	6.5
Fresh	5.2	5.6	4.2	3.9
Frozen ^{6/}	.9	.9	.8	.6
Canned ^{6/}	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8
Potatoes, sweetpotatoes	2.0	1.9	2.5	2.9
Fruits, total ^{7/}	6.2	6.0	6.4	7.5
Fresh	4.4	4.3	4.6	5.9
Canned ^{6/}	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.1
Fruit and vegetable juices ^{8/}	1.7	1.8	1.5	1.3
Cereals and bakery products	10.6	9.9	11.9	16.6
Flour and other cereals	3.0	2.6	3.8	6.5
Bakery products	7.6	7.3	8.1	10.1
Fats and oils ^{9/}	4.1	3.9	4.5	5.9
Butter	2.1	2.1	1.8	2.6
Margarine	.7	.5	1.3	1.3
Beverages, nonalcoholic	5.7	5.6	5.7	7.8
Sugar, sweets	2.5	2.3	3.1	5.1
Miscellaneous foods ^{10/}	4.2	4.1	4.7	4.9
Expense for food at home ^{11/}	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

^{1/} Derived from data in Food Consumption of Households in the Northeast, Report No. 2, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey. ^{2/} Includes variety and luncheon meats not shown separately. ^{3/} Mostly chicken. ^{4/} Excludes butter. ^{5/} Excludes potatoes and sweetpotatoes. Includes dried vegetables not shown separately and baby foods. ^{6/} Commercially prepared. ^{7/} Includes baby foods. ^{8/} Excludes home-canned or frozen fruit juices. ^{9/} Includes lard, other shortenings, salad and cooking oils, and salad dressings not shown separately. ^{10/} Includes nuts, soups, catsup, pickles, olives, puddings, prepared and partially prepared food mixtures, seasonings, etc. ^{11/} Excludes alcoholic beverages.

The farm household food dollar was divided among the food groups in much the same way as the urban food dollar, as indicated in table 5. But farm households spent larger shares for cereals and bakery products, fats and oils, and sugar and sweets, partly because of more home baking. Purchases of poultry, fluid whole milk, and eggs accounted for less of the farm food dollar, no doubt because of the popularity of production of these items for farm home use. Differences in income, kinds of foods purchased, and prices paid also played a part.

Consumption-Income Relationships

The average consumption rates for all households of 2 or more persons in each urbanization group (table 4) are affected by (1) the variation in consumption rates from one income class to another, (2) the distribution of households by income class, and (3) the effects of factors other than income.

Consumption Rates by Income Class

The amounts of individual foods consumed per person in northeastern urban households grouped according to their money income in 1954 provide the basis for study of possible relationships of food patterns to money income. For most individual foods, average consumption increased for successively higher income groups of households, but the rates of increase varied widely (table 6). A few actually decreased, some changed but little, while others increased at first and then decreased in the higher-income classes. ^{17/}

Beef and pork consumption both increased with income into the middle-income range, then beef leveled off while pork decreased sharply. The use of poultry rose some with income in the middle-income range with much of the increase in turkey.

The use of fresh vegetables in the spring of 1955 increased slowly from one income class to the next higher, offsetting the decline in canned vegetables. Frozen vegetables were used much more extensively in high-income households. Consumption of potatoes and sweetpotatoes was highest in the \$3-4,000 income class and dropped off to a lower level for the higher-income households.

Much more fresh fruit was consumed per person in households in the upper-income range than in those with less income, the difference being substantially greater than for fresh vegetables. Highest rates for canned fruit are found in the middle-income range. Consumption of frozen concentrated fruit juices increased sharply at first with each successively step up in income, then leveled off in the middle- and high-income groups.

^{17/} For similar data for other regions see April 1957, The National Food Situation, NFS-80, op. cit., pp. 28-31 and 43-47.

Table 6.- Consumption per person of selected foods, by income, urban households of 2 or more persons, in the Northeast, at home in a week, spring 1955 ^{1/}

Food item	Unit	Total ^{2/}	1954 family money income after income taxes							
			Under \$2,000	\$2- 3,000	\$3- 4,000	\$4- 5,000	\$5- 6,000	\$6- 8,000	\$8- 10,000	\$10,000 and over
Meat, total ^{3/}	Pounds	3.10	2.03	2.86	2.95	3.09	3.26	3.43	2.68	3.04
Beef	do.	1.29	.71	1.23	1.18	1.29	1.26	1.43	1.07	1.33
Veal	do.	.16	.05	.14	.15	.16	.16	.23	.17	.15
Pork	do.	.95	.80	.82	.97	.90	1.05	1.01	.87	.84
Lamb, mutton	do.	.22	.11	.21	.18	.21	.26	.27	.15	.26
Poultry, total ^{4/}	do.	.92	.85	.75	.78	.91	.94	1.12	.97	1.08
Chicken	do.	.77	.82	.65	.69	.76	.78	.84	.73	.66
Turkey	do.	.13	.00	.07	.09	.12	.14	.26	.24	.29
Fish and shellfish	do.	.47	.57	.42	.52	.42	.37	.56	.39	.51
Eggs	Dozens	.55	.52	.52	.52	.50	.58	.59	.63	.65
Fluid whole milk	Quarts	3.29	2.60	3.25	3.24	3.65	3.52	2.97	2.96	3.18
Ice cream	do.	.26	.12	.17	.27	.26	.30	.29	.25	.27
Cheese, other than cottage	Pounds	.21	.15	.17	.19	.22	.21	.24	.19	.18
Fresh vegetables ^{5/}	do.	2.71	2.10	2.50	2.60	2.59	2.98	2.84	2.65	3.02
Frozen vegetables ^{5/ 6/}	do.	.20	.11	.07	.17	.21	.20	.24	.24	.39
Canned vegetables ^{5/ 7/}	do.	.78	.63	.92	.87	.85	.83	.62	.71	.47
Potatoes, sweetpotatoes	do.	1.76	1.69	1.89	2.02	1.71	1.66	1.78	1.42	1.70
Fresh fruit	do.	2.74	2.50	2.37	2.60	2.50	2.57	2.90	3.28	3.37
Canned fruit ^{7/}	do.	.50	.38	.43	.51	.49	.57	.53	.47	.40
Frozen concentrated juices ^{8/}	do.	.16	.13	.10	.12	.18	.20	.17	.19	.15
Flour and other cereal products	do.	.90	.91	.95	.98	.86	.95	.92	1.01	.70
Bakery products	do.	2.21	1.76	2.22	2.18	2.20	2.47	2.47	1.95	2.12
Sugar, sweets	do.	.85	.83	.89	.93	.80	.83	.93	.99	.87
Fats and oils, total ^{9/}	do.	.71	.60	.67	.76	.66	.73	.75	.79	.82
Butter	do.	.25	.21	.21	.23	.22	.25	.24	.29	.33
Margarine	do.	.15	.13	.22	.16	.15	.15	.17	.10	.14
Average 1954 money income after income taxes	Dollars	5,086	1,360	2,519	3,514	4,500	5,421	6,830	8,888	14,324
Distribution of households by income class ^{10/}	Percent	100.0	6.4	9.8	20.4	24.3	14.5	14.8	4.8	5.0

^{1/} Based on data from Food Consumption of Households in the Northeast, Report No. 2, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey.

^{2/} Includes data for households not reporting income.

^{3/} Includes variety and luncheon meats not shown separately.

^{4/} Includes small amounts of other poultry not shown separately.

^{5/} Excludes potatoes and sweetpotatoes.

^{6/} Commercially frozen only.

^{7/} Commercially canned only.

^{8/} Single-strength equivalent. Commercially frozen juices.

^{9/} Includes lard, other shortenings, salad and cooking oils and salad dressings not shown separately.

^{10/} Excludes households not reporting income.

Middle-income households used more fresh fluid milk per person than households with less than \$4,000 income, but rates of consumption in income groups above \$6,000 ran lower than in the middle range of income.

The average rates of consumption per person are based on all households in the grouping, including households not using the item. Consequently, they reflect both the average quantity of the item used by users and the proportion of households using the item. Differences in the patterns of consumption for all households and for users only can be demonstrated by looking more closely at butter and margarine data for northeastern urban households. The average quantity of butter consumed per person in these households increased rather sharply with income, while margarine consumption decreased, but at a slower rate. The percentage using butter also rose with income, while the percentage for margarine went down. 18/

When the rates are converted to a per user basis, there is quite a different picture. 19/ Consumption of butter increases only slightly with income and the consumption of margarine goes down only a little. This indicates that the increase in the butter consumption rate with income was almost entirely due to more households using butter and relatively little to rising consumption rates by butter users. The decrease for margarine in relation to income was due mostly to fewer households using the item in the higher-income classes. Among those users of margarine the decrease in the amount consumed was small. Such information is an important key to market development, because, for example, it is an indicator of whether emphasis of promotion and research should be put on obtaining new customers or on cultivating households already using the product.

Distribution of Households by Income Class

Differences in the distribution of households by income class, already shown to be quite considerable among regions, are even more important among the 3 urbanization groups of the Northeast. The following percentages of households in each urbanization group with 1954 money incomes after income taxes below specified amounts illustrate such variations:

	Under \$2,000	Under \$4,000	Under \$6,000
Urban	6.4	36.6	75.3
Rural nonfarm	12.6	44.6	82.2
Farm	29.7	69.0	87.7

18/ Data on percentage of households using an item are shown in Reports 1-5, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey along with data on average quantity used per household and average money value of the item used per household.

19/ This conversion can be done by dividing the averages for all the households by the percentage of households using the item.

With rather wide variations in consumption rates for the various foods by income class and in the distribution of households by income class, it is obvious that consideration must be given to both of these factors in detailed analyses.

Influence of Other Factors on Consumption- Income Relationships

Data in the first 5 survey reports are sorted by region, urbanization, and income. Of course, there are other factors which affect consumption of foods, but the survey sample is not large enough for tabulation of the detailed consumption data with further subdivisions within these classifications. Despite this handicap, other data can be brought into study of the variations in the rates of consumption among households grouped by income. The survey data on household composition by sex and age groupings are an example (table 7). ^{20/}

Meat consumption per person in the Northeast rose steadily with income up to the \$8,000 level, dropped sharply for the \$8-10,000 group of households, and then increased somewhat for the \$10,000 and over group. Much of this drop probably was related to the larger size of households in that sample group, providing twice as many meals at home per household for children under 10 as in the \$6-8,000 income group.

The close relationship between number of children under 16 and the average rate of fluid whole milk consumption appears to be more significant than income-consumption relationships. This underlines dairymen's interests in persuading adults to consume more milk.

Food Consumption of 1-person Households

The foregoing discussion has been concerned with food consumption of households of 2 or more persons.. The number of 1-person households in the 1955 survey sample was not large enough to allow tabulation of that group's consumption by income class. By covering only housekeeping households, the survey excluded a relatively large number of 1-person units, particularly single men, who are no so likely to prepare the required minimum of 10 meals at home in a week. ^{21/} Even so, the available data provide some insight into the consumption patterns of single-person households.

Importance in Total

In the Northeast the 1-person households made up about 8 percent of all the households participating in the survey. Most of these (82 percent)

^{20/} See footnote 9 above.

^{21/} See footnote 6 above for survey eligibility requirements.

Table 7.--Distribution of persons in specified age groups, by income, urban households in the Northeast, at home in a week, spring 1955 ^{1/}

Age groups	All house- holds	1- person house- holds	Households of 2 or more persons by 1954 family money income after income taxes										
			Total	Under	\$2- \$2,000	\$3- 4,000	\$4- 5,000	\$5- 6,000	\$6- 8,000	\$8- 10,000	\$10,000 and over	Pct.	Pct.
			2/	\$2,000	3,000	4,000	5,000	6,000	8,000	10,000	and over		
Total persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Children, total	35.9	.8	36.8	27.8	35.2	42.1	42.8	37.4	31.8	36.5	32.9		
3 years and under	8.4	.3	8.5	11.8	11.0	12.0	9.8	6.1	3.7	10.8	6.3		
4-9 years	12.4	.1	12.9	8.1	11.5	15.1	16.1	13.8	8.2	11.7	11.2		
10-15 years	10.0	.2	10.1	5.7	9.6	11.1	11.1	11.8	12.1	6.3	8.6		
16-20 years	5.1	.2	5.3	2.2	3.1	3.9	5.3	5.7	7.8	7.7	6.8		
Adults, total	64.1	99.2	63.2	72.2	64.8	57.9	57.2	62.6	68.2	63.5	67.1		
21-34 years	17.4	7.1	17.7	13.1	18.3	21.1	18.7	17.3	11.8	21.3	14.3		
35-54 years	27.3	22.4	27.6	11.7	17.2	22.6	26.8	34.5	35.1	23.0	38.9		
55-74 years	16.3	58.1	15.1	32.3	22.6	12.6	10.5	8.9	17.8	17.6	13.0		
75 years and over	3.1	11.6	2.8	15.1	6.7	1.6	1.2	1.9	3.5	1.6	.9		

^{1/} Derived from data in Dietary Levels of Households in the Northeast, Report No. 7, 1955 Households Food Consumption Survey, p. 11. Distributions of persons in households based on the total number of meals served at home, including, for example, children visiting in 1-person households.

^{2/} Includes data for households not classified by income.

were in the urban group, a larger proportion than for households of 2 or more persons (72 percent). One-member families accounted for about 3 percent of the total food market in the Northeast in the spring of 1955. 22/

One-person households are concentrated in the urban group, so this discussion can be limited to that group. About 31 percent of all the 1-person urban households participating in the survey were located in the Northeast. Almost 60 percent of these were women 55 years or older, a very much higher percentage than in any of the other regions. Also, 84 percent of all the 1-person households in the Northeast were women. 23/

Comparisons with Households
of 2 or more Persons

Urban 1-person households in the Northeast spent about \$1.60 more per person a week for food at home in spring 1955 than did the households of 2 or more persons. They also consumed a greater quantity per person of most of the major foods. Pork, veal, margarine, and flour and cereal products are among the exceptions.

There are many factors that probably contributed to these higher rates. In terms of average income per person, derived from the average incomes per family, the 1-person households had higher incomes. Also, some of the older people living alone probably were using some of their savings for current living expenses. The one-unit households faced certain disadvantages of small-scale cookery and most of their meals were served to adults (with larger size servings), while the larger households provided many meals for young children.

Despite their higher consumption rates, the singles had a lower percentage of households using most of the foods. This indicates that the 1-person households generally had a very much higher rate per user for a particular item than did multiple-person households. Small-scale food preparation often requires the use of a particular item for more meals in a week, with less variety. Consequently, their purchases were spread over fewer items, leading to lower percentages of households using each item in the 7 days preceding the interview.

A similar relationship also existed for food away from home. One-person families had a somewhat higher expenditure per person for food away from home, but a considerably lower percentage of these families bought meals and snacks. The expenditures for food away from home are probably made up of rather large expenditures by younger 1-person families, who eat out often, and little or no expense for food away from home by many of the older ones.

22/ October 1956, The National Food Situation, NFS-78, op. cit., p. 38.

23/ Dietary Levels of Households in the Northeast, Report No. 7, 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey, p. 11. Also see table 7 in this article for data on the distribution of 1-person households by age group.

